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Agenda item 2

Ministerial declaration

Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations, participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2013 of the Economic and Social Council, held in Geneva from 1 to 4 July 2013, and having considered the theme of the annual ministerial review, "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals",

Reaffirming commitments to the use of science, technology and innovation, as well as the potential of culture, for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, made at the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, environmental, social and related fields,

Recalling Agenda 21,[1] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)[2] and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[3]

Recalling also the World Summit on the Information Society, of 2003 and 2005, and its outcomes,[4]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] and noting the regional meetings and other preparatory processes, the national voluntary presentations and the deliberations held during the high-level segment,

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

[4] See A/C.2/59/3 and A/60/687.

[5] E/2013/54.

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Have adopted the following declaration:

1. We reaffirm the 2012 ministerial declaration of the Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review.[6]

2. We affirm that science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, are essential enablers and drivers for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as poverty eradication, and therefore recommend that they should be given due consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

3. We underline the importance of technology as one of the key means of implementation in the pursuit of sustainable development, along with finance, capacity-building and trade.

4. We recognize that investment in science, technology and innovation, and culture can create decent work opportunities and foster competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, social inclusion and sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and affirm that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions, which is our overarching goal. In this regard, we consider green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development and that it could provide options for policymaking but should not comprise a set of rigid rules. We emphasize that it should contribute to eradicating poverty as well as to sustained economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earth's ecosystems. In this regard, we encourage efforts towards achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as laid down in paragraphs 57 to 74 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled "The future we want".[3]

5. We also recognize that culture is an essential component of sustainable development; represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for the individual and community; and is an important factor in building social inclusion and eradicating poverty, providing for economic growth and ownership of development processes. We therefore commit to pursuing a more visible and effective integration and mainstreaming of culture into social, environmental and economic development policies and strategies at all levels.

6. We acknowledge the fundamental importance of cultural diversity as a source of enrichment for humankind and a contributor to sustainable development of local communities, peoples and nations, and in this regard recall the principles of the 2001 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.[7]

7. We emphasize that science, technology and innovation should be inclusive and people-centred, benefiting and involving all people, especially the poor and those

[6] E/HLS/2012/1.

[7] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October–3 November 2001*, vol. I and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, sect. V, resolution 25, annex I.

at risk of having limited access to science, technology and innovation, inter alia, women, children and youth, including by increasing the accessibility of persons with disabilities to goods and services.

8. While welcoming the rising global prosperity powered by science, technology and innovation in the last two decades, we recognize that each country faces specific challenges to advance science, technology and innovation, and underscore the special challenges faced by developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States and African countries, as well as the specific challenges facing the middle-income countries. Countries in situations of conflict also need special attention. In this regard, we emphasize the need to strengthen all forms of international cooperation in science, technology and innovation, and culture.

9. We stress the need to remove the obstacles to the full realization of all rights of people living under foreign occupation, which adversely affect their social and economic development, including their access to science, technology and innovation to promote sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

10. We also stress the importance of removing obstacles to access to science, technology and innovation to promote sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and terrorism.

11. We recognize that current and emerging global challenges on climate change, food security, water, energy, including renewable energy, biodiversity loss, disaster risk reduction and sustainable consumption and production patterns, resource efficiency, chemicals and waste require urgent action based on the best available science, technology and interdisciplinary research.

12. We also recognize that information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion which will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy. We reiterate the need to bridge the technology gaps between developed and developing countries, including the digital divide, through appropriate measures, inter alia, overcoming basic infrastructural constraints, including availability, access, affordability and quality of electricity and broadband and mobile services, with particular attention to locally adapted solutions that can be scaled up regionally.

13. We further recognize that gender equality and the empowerment of women are important for sustainable development and our common future. In this regard, we welcome the important contribution that women make to all fields of science, technology and innovation, as well as culture, and recognize their work in the full spectrum of professions in these fields.

14. We recognize the need to prioritize international cooperation efforts to adapt and bring to scale all innovative and successful technological solutions that address sustainable development challenges, in particular for developing countries, and acknowledge the important and complementary contribution that entrepreneurship can make in driving innovation. In this regard, we also recognize

the important role of greater international cooperation at all levels, with North-South cooperation complemented by South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation.

15. We also recognize the importance of national-, regional- and global-level capacity- and institution-building of scientific and technological capacities for sustainable development and tackling inequality and other global challenges. This can help countries, especially developing countries, to develop their own innovative solutions, scientific research, and new environmentally sound technologies, and creative industries, with the support of the international community and through collaboration among public and private sector, civil society and research institutions.

16. We further recognize the key role of Governments in enhancing the science-policy-society interface and nurturing a culture of innovation, with active engagement of relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society and research institutions, which all have complementary roles.

17. We recognize the role of private financing in complementing public financing for access to technology, including through public-private partnerships and other measures, as appropriate.

18. We also recognize the importance of encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises, young entrepreneurs and women in science, technology and innovation, as well as in the creative industries, and the need to address the barriers that they face in accessing private and public financing.

19. We note that developed countries account for the bulk of global research and development expenditure and intellectual property rights holders, and we recognize the transformational changes in innovation dynamics, including an increase in intellectual property rights holders in developing countries.

20. We recall the request made in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development for relevant United Nations organizations to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, and the report of the Secretary-General on this request,[8] noting the recommendations made therein to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session regarding the facilitation mechanism on the basis of the options identified and taking into account existing models. We further recall the decision to hold a series of workshops on, inter alia, the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs, including capacity-building, and a technology facilitation mechanism, taking into account existing mechanisms and the need to avoid duplication and promote synergies and coherence, as well as for the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the discussions, options and recommendations from the workshops, including on the way forward, as well as on additional inputs from Member States and the United Nations system. We invite Member States to engage actively and constructively in debating the report, upon presentation.

21. We also recall the request made by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to undertake a joint gap and capacity analysis on a priority basis by 2013, with the aim of establishing a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries, building on existing international initiatives.

[8] A/67/348.

22. We emphasize the importance of designing policies to support science, technology and innovation, and to utilize the potential of culture within the framework of national development strategies and action plans for sustainable development, linking them to economic, social and environmental policies and setting clear priorities for public expenditure and investment, and in this regard encourage Governments to allocate appropriate financing, in accordance with their national development priorities, and we reiterate the need to systematically incorporate a gender perspective into these policies.

23. We recognize that the culture of innovation can provide a supporting environment for the advancement of science, technology and innovation, and call for efforts to promote creativity and a culture of innovation through a variety of measures, inter alia, awareness campaigns that emphasize the potential of science, technology and innovation, as well as culture; increased visibility of the achievements of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, artists and performers within societies; encouragement of creativity and calculated risk-taking; science, technology and innovation-related campaigns; and the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills within education systems.

24. We also recognize the valuable contribution of traditional knowledge to the development of science and technology and their application, inter alia, in agriculture, health care, industry and culture.

25. We stress the importance of fostering synergies between modern science and technology and local and indigenous knowledge, practices and innovation as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development. In this regard, we recognize the importance of preserving and maintaining local and indigenous traditional knowledge and community practices of environmental management, as well as the promotion of global awareness of the linkages between cultural and biological diversity, including through the preservation and encouragement of the customary use of biological resources, as part of a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

26. We note with concern the widespread underrepresentation of women and girls in many fields of science and technology, which represents a loss of talent and perspectives, and reaffirm our commitments to achieving full and equal access and participation of women and men in the design of science and technology policies and research and development agenda-setting, as well as in decision-making in science and technology institutions.

27. We reiterate the need to ensure coordination and coherence on science, technology and innovation and culture-related policies, and to pursue evidence-based decision-making through close collaboration and coordination among the institutions within government, academic research communities, the private sector and civil society, which have complementary roles.

28. We encourage the development of cultural industries, cultural tourism and culture-related microenterprises, and stress the need for all countries to facilitate the growing contribution of creative industries, including cultural industries, to international trade consistent with countries' international commitments and obligations, where applicable.

29. We recognize the importance of grass-roots and inclusive innovation, including low-tech innovative solutions, aimed at users facing affordability constraints, and of providing services to as many people as possible with few resources, and encourage Governments, in accordance with their national

development priorities, to foster and promote its role in national innovation policies and systems designed to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development.

30. We reaffirm the key role of all levels of government and legislative bodies, and acknowledge the efforts of local authorities and communities, in promoting sustainable development, including through the design and implementation of science, technology, innovation and cultural policies.

31. We acknowledge the role of civil society and the importance of enabling all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development, and we recognize that information and communications technologies are facilitating the flow of information between Governments and the public, and also recognize that improved participation of civil society depends upon, inter alia, strengthening access to information and building civil society capacity and an enabling environment. In this regard, we recall article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[9] and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[10]

32. We encourage the promotion of a sustainable life cycle approach emphasizing the sustainable production and consumption, including in the design stage, of products that ensures, inter alia, effective management, prevention and reduction of waste. We therefore commit to further reduce, reuse and recycle waste and to increase energy recovery from waste, with a view to managing the majority of global waste in an environmentally sound manner and, where possible, as a resource. We support regional and national initiatives necessary to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in order to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing the issue of, and where appropriate decoupling, economic growth and environmental degradation, by improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and by reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste. In this regard, all countries should take action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development needs and capabilities of developing countries through mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries.

33. We underscore the importance of educational policies and institutions to promote science, technology and innovation, including through building the capacities of higher educational institutions, especially in developing countries, to carry out research and innovation for sustainable development, including in the field of education, and to develop quality and innovative programmes, including entrepreneurship and business skills training, professional, technical and vocational training and lifelong learning, geared to bridging skills gaps for advancing national sustainable development objectives.

34. We emphasize the importance of greater international cooperation to improve access to education, including by building and strengthening education infrastructure and increasing investment in education, particularly investment to improve the quality of education for all in developing countries. We encourage international education exchanges and partnerships, including the creation of fellowships and scholarships to help to achieve global education goals.

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[9] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[10] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

35. We reaffirm the need to achieve equal access and participation of women and girls in education and training in science, technology and innovation, to integrate a gender perspective in the science and technology curricula at all levels of education, to promote career development for women scientists, researchers and engineers, and to develop entrepreneurial activities focused on science and technology for youth and women. We also encourage the use of gender-based analysis and gender impact assessments in research and development in science, technology and innovation as well as user-driven approaches to technology development in order to increase the relevance and usefulness of advancements in science and technology for both women and men.

36. We encourage the fostering of effective public-private partnerships, including for research policies and activities, which are critical to driving science, technology and innovation to address local development priorities in pursuit of sustainable development.

37. We underline the importance of utilizing science, technology and innovation at all stages, as well as traditional knowledge, in the design and implementation of more coordinated and comprehensive strategies for disaster risk reduction and disaster recovery at the national and international levels in order to increase resilience and provide a smoother transition between relief, recovery and development.

38. We recognize that innovation can be encouraged through the use of various public financing tools at the national level.

39. We emphasize the importance of technology transfer to developing countries, and recall the provisions on technology transfer, finance, access to information and intellectual property rights as agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[2] in particular the call made therein to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and the development, transfer and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed. We also note the further evolution of discussions and agreements on these issues since the adoption of the Plan of Implementation.

40. We stress the importance of promoting a balanced and effective intellectual property framework within which to incentivize innovation and investment. That framework should reflect the new and changing science, technology and innovation landscape. Intellectual property systems should take into account the development needs of each country.

41. We recall article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,[11] in which it is recognized that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain control, protect and develop their intellectual property rights over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional

[11] General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

cultural expressions. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.

42. We also recall the commitment of each contracting party to the Convention on Biological Diversity[12] and the Protocols thereto,[13] noting in particular article 8 (*j*) of the Convention, subject to its national legislation, to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices. In this regard, we note ongoing discussions in the World Intellectual Property Organization and other international forums.

43. We welcome regional and cross-regional cooperation for science, technology and innovation development involving, as relevant and upon request, United Nations organizations and bodies, the regional commissions and other intergovernmental organizations, development banks and financial institutions acting at the regional level, as well as the private sector, research institutions and civil society organizations. In this respect, we encourage support for public and private science, technology and innovation centres of excellence and research and development capacity-building, as well as other initiatives that foster cooperation at the regional level and promote well-functioning and diverse regional science, technology and innovation systems.

44. We also welcome initiatives to foster cultural cooperation networks at the regional level for knowledge and information-sharing and mutually beneficial cultural and policy agreements for sustainable development, which facilitate cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue, as well as intraregional economic growth, social cohesion and sound environmental management.

45. We recognize the need to ensure effective linkages, synergies and coherence among global, regional, subregional and national processes and institutions, including for existing arrangements and joint research and development projects, to advance science-policy links and develop science, technology and innovation in the pursuit of sustainable development.

46. We also recognize the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to give strong support to developing countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development, including through actions undertaken in accordance with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and for achieving sustainable development goals.

47. We stress the need to promote capacity-building at all levels for the development of a dynamic cultural and creative sector, in particular by encouraging creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, supporting the development of cultural institutions and cultural industries, providing technical and vocational training for cultural professionals and increasing employment opportunities in the cultural and creative sector for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

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[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[13] Ibid., vol. 2226, No. 30619; see also United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/1.

48. We commit to ensuring that women and men fully enjoy their right to access, participate in and contribute to cultural life. We also commit to achieving full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making in culture. In this regard, we further commit to develop gender-sensitive cultural policies and programmes at the local, national and international levels, and to take measures to address gender stereotypes of women and men and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

49. We encourage all relevant United Nations bodies in a coordinated manner to continue to review, monitor and assess progress made on implementation of science, technology and innovation policies and the contribution of culture to the achievement of sustainable development through the compilation, analysis and development of data, including indicators and statistics, as appropriate, with a view to informing development policies and relevant reports.

50. We welcome existing international efforts to provide searchable public databases of available intellectual property assets and resources with the specific aim of increasing the availability of scientific and technical information in developing countries, supporting researchers in developing countries to create and develop new solutions to technical challenges faced at the local and global levels, and reinforcing the capacity of developing countries to participate in the global knowledge economy.

51. We request the Economic and Social Council system, in close collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and with input from all relevant stakeholders, to work towards policy review, dialogue and recommendations on science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

54th plenary meeting
16 December 2013